Claims:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously Presented) A system for inserting an instrument into a body cavity, comprising:

an instrument having an elongate body with a proximal end and a selectively steerable distal end and defining a lumen therebetween, the elongate body comprising a plurality of segments;

a plurality of transponders located on the elongate body each of the plurality of transponders having a signature; and

an external navigation unit adapted for detecting the signature of each of the plurality of transponders .

3. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 2 further comprising a display that displays the position of the instrument in a patient when the external navigation unit detects a transponder signal.

4. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 3 wherein the display is configured to show corresponding movement of the instrument as the instrument moves within the patient.

5. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 2 further comprising a datum speculum.

6. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 2 wherein the external navigation unit is adapted to guide and track the instrument while the instrument is maneuvered within the patient.

7. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 2 wherein the external navigation unit may be used to electronically mark the position of the instrument.

8. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 2 wherein the transponders comprise a magnetic sensor.

9. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 2 wherein the system detects the transponder signature using magnetic detection technology.

10. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 2 wherein the external navigation system detects the transponder signature employing a scheme similar to that used in the global positioning system.

11. (Previously Presented) A method of using non-contact tracking to position an instrument, comprising:

advancing an instrument into a space in the body of a patient;

tracking the position of a transponder on the instrument using a navigation system; and

displaying the position of the instrument in relation to the space in the body of the patient using the tracked position of the transponder.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 wherein advancing a steerable instrument into a space in the body of a patient comprises advancing a steerable instrument through an incision.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 wherein advancing a steerable instrument into a space in the body of a patient comprises advancing a steerable instrument through a natural opening in the patient's body.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 further comprising:

further advancing the steerable instrument within the body of the patient; and

showing the movement of the steerable instrument that corresponds to the further advancing.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14 wherein further advancing the steerable instrument within the body of the patient selectively maneuvers the steerable instrument around organs in the patient's body.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 further comprising:
electronically marking the position of the steerable instrument.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 further comprising:
using a three dimensional model in the electronic memory of an electronic motion controller to control the steerable instrument.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 17 herein the electronic motion controller automatically controls a portion of steerable instrument to conform to the three-dimensional model in the memory of the electronic motion controller.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11 further comprising:
guiding and tracking the steerable instrument using the navigation system.